



THE

MIRROR

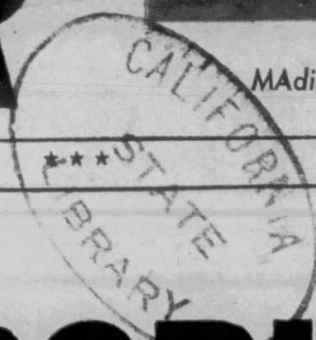
SPORTS FINAL

LOS ANGELES

FRIDAY, MAY 13, 1949

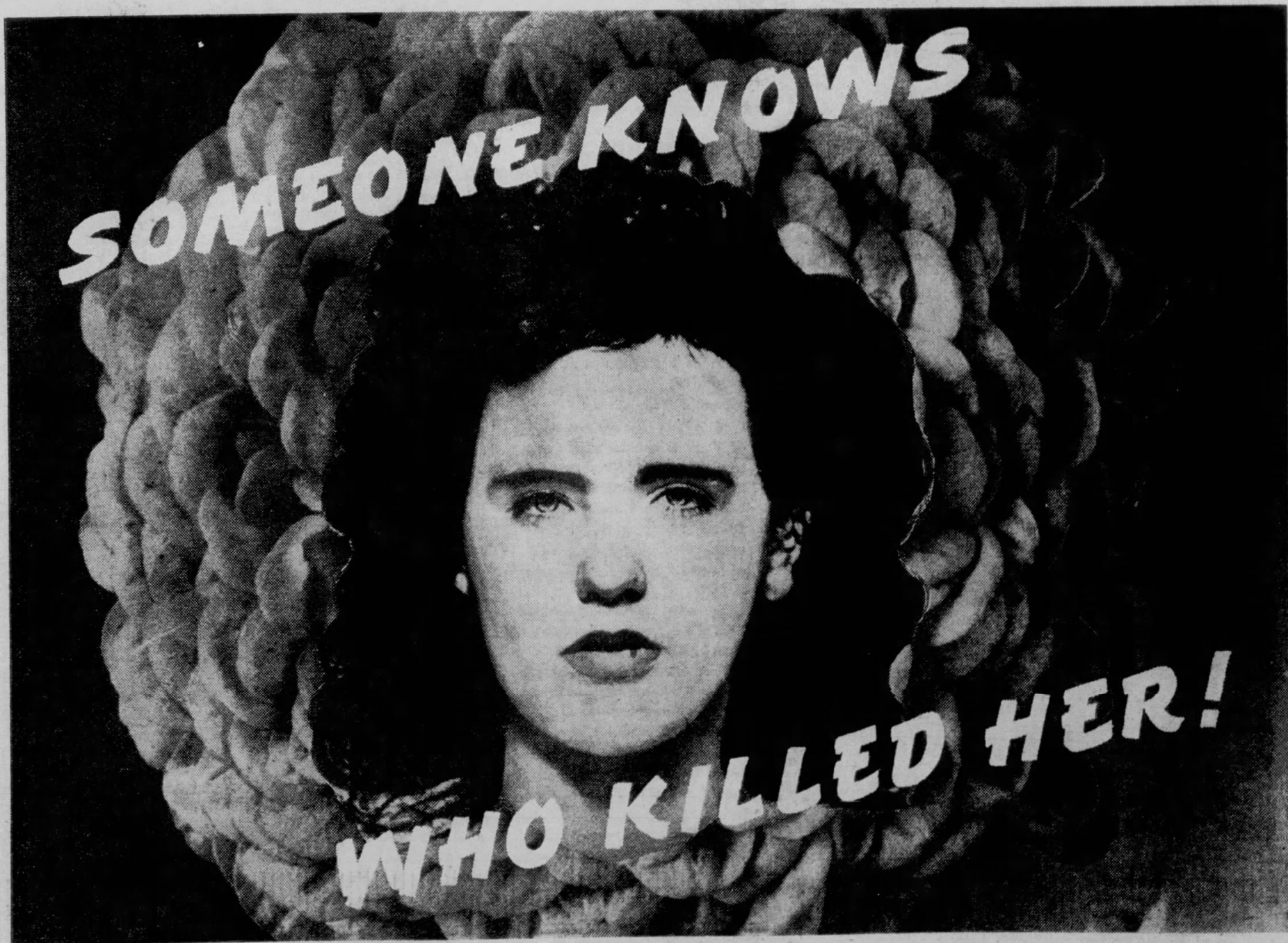
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Vol. I—No. 185



BANDITS TERRORIZE 22 IN L.A. BAR, FLEE WITH \$10,000

(STORY, PAGE 2)



Mirror Offers Rewards--\$100,000

(DETAILS, PAGE 3)

SOMEONE KNOWS!

\$100,000 in Rewards For Murder Clues

Murder is a public affair.

An unsolved murder is a public affront.

To remove the blight of Los Angeles county's unsolved slayings The Mirror stands ready to pay \$100,000 for information the police can use.

No criticism of city and county officials is implied in The Mirror's efforts to aid in solution of unsolved crimes through the Citizen Witness Plan.

Officials Commend Mirror Reward Offer

Telegrams, phone calls and letters commending The Mirror for its public spirited action in offering rewards for solutions to Los Angeles' unsolved murders today poured into Mirror editorial offices.

Law enforcement officers, civic officials and private citizens joined in praising The Mirror's offer as a real service to the community in the highest traditions of American journalism.

Among the first to indorse The Mirror's Citizen Witness Plan were police officials of the city and county governments.

The following comments were received at The Mirror shortly after publication of the \$100,000 reward offer.

"The police department heartily welcomes any aid to law enforcement undertaken by the press and public. The Citizen Witness Plan of The Mirror is a vigorous, well-planned action against crime that deserves the full cooperation of every citizen."
—Police Chief C. B. Horrall.

"I highly commend The Mirror for leading the way in helping us solve these numerous unsolved

murders. I know The Mirror will keep information secret until the case breaks, just as we do in the sheriff's department.

"I've always said we must look to the man in the street for help in solving crimes. No matter what an officer knows, he has got to depend on witnesses for solutions. I wish citizens would realize how important they are as witnesses, but many do not.

"A lot of people will see and know things they don't realize are material to a case until they are interviewed by Mirror reporters and officers." — Norris Stensland, chief of detectives, L.A. county sheriff's office.

"This is a very fine public spirited gesture on the part of The Mirror. I think it is an outstanding example of how a newspaper can give real service to a community by taking the lead in such an important endeavor."
—George Cronk, chairman of the

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Most of the 1500 murders committed in this county in the past 10 years have been solved by diligent—and often brilliant—police work.

But a residue of unsolved killings too high for the safety of our citizens remains.

The spirit in which The Mirror is offering \$100,000 worth of co-operation with authorities is reflected in the comments of city and county officials upon the Citizen Witness Plan.

\$5000 for Each One

No matter what your walk of life, you may know who committed one or more of 20 separate murders. For their solution The Mirror will pay \$5000 cash each.

Someone knows who committed every one.

Maybe they know by accident—just happened by the right place at the right time.

Maybe they have kept silent because they had "no business" being there.

Perhaps the killer is an enemy, with friends who would retaliate.

Those and many other simple, personal reasons may be the cloak of mystery surrounding an estimated 150 unsolved murders committed in Los Angeles county since 1939.

Now, however, for the first time witnesses can give information.
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HERE IS HOW THE LAST
PAGE OF YOUR CLUE LETTER
TO THE MIRROR SHOULD
LOOK. THIS SIMPLE CODE
WILL KEEP SECRET THE
IDENTITY OF CITIZEN
WITNESSES WHO HELP SOLVE
L.A. COUNTY MURDERS.

AK 7652

AK 7652

This simple but foolproof code system assures complete secrecy for Mirror readers who furnish clues to L.A.'s unsolved murders. Do not sign the last page of your letter. Choose any two letters of the alphabet and any four numbers. Write them on the last page in two places as illustrated and then tear off the code number in the corner and keep it. Mail letter to Postoffice Box 1313, Los Angeles. Detailed explanation on Page 12.

YOU CAN HELP

Which of Los Angeles county's unsolved murders is your choice for inclusion in the \$100,000 reward offer?

Case histories of 19 others besides today's Black Dahlia slaying will be published in The Mirror.

There is a reward of \$5000 on each.

Send your recommendations for cases to be included to Citizen Witness Plan, The Mirror, 145 S. Spring St., Los Angeles.

Deadline for receipt of letters is July 13, 1949.

WHO KILLED BEAUTIFUL BLACK DAHLIA?



ELIZABETH SHORT
Her gruesome death a mystery

(With presentation today of the Black Dahlia murder case, The Mirror begins publication of case histories of 20 unsolved Los Angeles murders. The series constitutes an organized effort to aid justice and make Los Angeles a safer place to live. Details of the \$100,000 Citizen Witness reward plan, devised to bring forth clues that will solve these slayings, may be found elsewhere in this issue. ED.)

By HERB STINSON

For sheer horror the mutilation murder of the Black Dahlia—young and beautiful Elizabeth Short—was something out of a maniac's nightmare.

For impenetrable mystery it rivals anything in the long annals of the Los Angeles Police department.

Yet no murder is completely insoluble. Someone knows.

Always there is some sort of a key—somewhere.

It may be an unwary word dropped by someone. Or a description matched with a face half-remembered, a gout of blood unexplained, the furtive actions of some unidentified man, any of a thousand and one things meaning little on the surface but

heavy with significance when set into the jigsaw puzzle of a baffling crime.

Key Still Missing

The key to the sadistic slaying of the Black Dahlia is still missing.

Police believe it is hidden in five blank days before the murder of the pretty playgirl, who gained her exotic sobriquet from her jet-black hair and her fondness for black clothing from coats to underthings.

If that key can be found it will send a brutal killer to a richly-deserved end in the gas chamber.

The case broke on a midwinter morning, Jan. 15, 1947.

A young housewife, Mrs. John Bersinger, 25, of 3705 Norton Ave., and her 3-year-old daughter, Anne, started out that morning for a stroll under the pale winter sun. They crossed 39th St. and continued south.

There were no houses along that block, just a dreary expanse of weed-grown lots, the haunt of lovers by night and a dump for neighborhood debris by day.

Halfway along the block Mrs. Bersinger's

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CLUE LETTERS

Method Protects Citizens

Anyone offering information under The Mirror Citizen Witness Plan is guaranteed complete secrecy by the simple 15-point method to be followed in claiming a \$5000 reward.

Possibly reading these words is someone who knows the key clue to the Black Dahlia mystery but has kept silent out of fear of the publicity attending any big crime.

Perhaps he has personal reasons for not wanting it known that he was at a certain place at a certain time. Under The Mirror Citizen Witness Plan he can keep it secret forever, and still collect a reward.

If you—anyone living anywhere—know something that might lead to the identity and conviction of the Black Dahlia murderer, follow this simple method:

1. Write down all you know about the crime, giving names, dates, times.
2. Use plain paper.
3. Typewrite, or else print by hand—use no handwriting.
4. Do not sign your information.
5. Pick out any two letters of the alphabet and any four figures.
6. Write this code (Example: AX1856) at the bottom of your information sheet in the center of the page. (See illustration)
7. Tear off a small corner of the page in a jagged line.
8. On this piece you have torn off, write again the same code letters and numbers you have written on the letter.
9. Keep the torn bit safe somewhere. Its code letters and numbers must match those on your information sheet; its torn edge matches the missing corner of your sheet.
10. Mail your letter to P. O. Box 1313, Los Angeles 53. Nothing will be paid for information phoned in.
11. If you have information on more than one murder, write separate information sheets on each one.
12. All letters on the 20 murders must be postmarked before midnight July 13, 1949, to qualify for a reward.
13. In case of duplicate information the reward will be paid to the person whose information is received first.
14. To collect, you or your agent need only present the "code corner" of your letter to The Mirror city editor after the code signature has been published in The Mirror.
15. Read The Mirror daily for fact outlines on the 20 unsolved murders.

All information received will be checked and then turned over to the police.

The Mirror will remain sole judge in all matters arising out of this reward offer.



WHERE BLACK DAHLIA'S MUTILATED BODY WAS FOUND

Who Killed Beautiful Black Dahlia?

Continued from Page 3

glance caught the white shine of flesh among the weeds a few feet from the sidewalk.

"Some drunk sleeping it off," she thought.

She and the baby took a few more steps. Then Mrs. Bersinger halted, numb for an instant with horror. This was no sleeping drunk.

In the frayed weeds lay the nude body of a young girl, completely severed at the waist.

The housewife gathered up her youngster in her arms and ran, still sickened, to the first house that had a phone.

Homicide detectives arrived. They were men whose work had conditioned them to death in all its forms. But even they had a moment of nausea at the sight of the desecration that had been worked on the girl's shapely body.

It was, as Mrs. Bersinger had seen, bisected at the waist.

Orgy of Torture

Before that last sadistic gesture, however, the frenzied killer had indulged in an orgy of torture. Rope marks showed on ankles, wrists and neck.

The firm breasts had been slashed. A knife had gashed the cheeks from each corner of the mouth. There were cruel stab wounds in the abdomen, the back, the left leg.

The condition of the head, bearing deep impact wounds, afforded the hope that the girl had been mercifully unconscious when the grisly torture had been inflicted.

Homicide Captain Jack A. Donahoe ordered more manpower to the scene. Detective teams combed the weedy lots, the street, the neighborhood for clues to either the killer or the identity of his victim.

Sought Identity

A description of the girl went on the air. She had apparently been in her early twenties, five feet three inches tall and weighing 118 pounds. Her nose was small, a little tiptilted. Her forehead was high, her eyes gray green and her hair a shining black.

The detectives quickly turned up two interrelated clues. One was the report of Robert Meyer, of 3900 S. Bronson Ave., that he had seen a 1935 or 1936 Ford sedan stop near the location for a few minutes between 6:30 and 7 that morning and then speed away. He had not had a good look at the driver.

Second bit of evidence was a skid mark and a smudged tire-print in mud in the gutter nearby.

Meanwhile, technicians added their findings. The body had been carefully washed clean of blood. The knife marks indicated the torso had been severed while the girl was in a semi-recumbent position as she would have been in a bathtub.

The dissection had been well done, and could have been the work of someone skilled in surgery.

Death, it was estimated, had occurred about 10 hours earlier.

The murder sequence, at least, seemed clear. The girl had been tortured and killed during the night in a place that afforded both privacy and the uninterrupted use of a bathroom. It could have been a private home, a hotel or a motel.

Boldness of the murderer in transporting his mutilated victim through the streets in broad daylight and disposing of the body within sight of a dozen homes

pointed to a person either insane or one whose egomaniac self-assurance bordered on the insane.

Every hotel and motel within a radius of miles was checked. Sewers, rubbish heaps, dumps, trash cans in the area were searched. Police fingerprint files were checked.

Meanwhile, the Los Angeles Times had wired the girl's fingerprint classification to the FBI in Washington.

"Prints those of Elizabeth Short, 22," the reply said. "Picked up in Santa Barbara in 1943 on delinquency charge. Released to return to mother, Mrs. Cleo Short, Medford, Mass."

Good Quiet Girl

The mother, contacted by phone, described Elizabeth as a good, quiet girl who had quit high school in her second year to earn her own living. She had waited on tables in Florida winters, returned home summers.

In 1943, bitten by the bug of film ambition, she had moved to California.

"In a recent letter," Mrs. Short said, "she told me she was working in a hospital in San Diego."

Police wired San Diego authorities, and the resultant publicity brought a Pacific Beach woman, Mrs. Elvera French, and her daughter, Dorothy, hurrying to officials.

The information they supplied

gave the investigation a new force and a new direction.

It resulted in a broadcast for a "redheaded young man," the first definite suspect.

It also veered the hunt toward the demiworld of Hollywood, where the tinsel is tarnished and shoddiness shows through the glamour.

(The factual story of the unsolved Black Dahlia murder will be completed in The Mirror tomorrow.)



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